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Foreword

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Editor in Chief's Foreword

Roughly a year after the first stay-at-home order in the United States, the coronavirus pandemic continues to devastate our communities. Our country mourns over 500,000 deaths, a staggering number that health officials have said might have been prevented with a comprehensive response from the federal government. This unparalleled crisis is syndemic with another surrounding our constitutional democracy and which recently manifested as an attack on this nation's capital.

In order to grapple with these ongoing tragedies, we begin this issue with United States Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson's and Professor Lawrence J. Trautman's deep dive into how COVID-19 has laid bare the fundamental racism in the United States. Their article provides a demographic tour of the United States and how specific populations have been disproportionately impacted by the virus. The article calls for government policies and budget priorities that reflect what our country should value.

Adding to the conversation around the pandemic, John Taschner describes how COVID-19 elevated the stakes of the 2020 United States Presidential Election particularly amidst the division across political, health, and social lines threatening the sanctity of American democracy. Taschner touches on the realized and potential ramifications—nationally and internationally—from the lack of a peaceful transition of power after the 2020 Presidential Election.

This issue concludes with a student note by Ayushi Neogi, a befitting historical look into how South Asian Americans fit in a country that has often interpreted race as only Black and white. It analyzes the various exclusionary and xenophobic legislation that existed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Neogi's note wrestles with how South Asian Americans grapple their newfound privilege and proximity to whiteness, often by promoting conservative and ironically exclusionary rhetoric. Reflection, recognition of the community's turbulent history, and deeper

political engagement are a few ways in which South Asian Americans can find their place in a bi-racial society.

The beginning of the year 2021 requires us to continue to reflect on the fragility of our democracy and face our own mortality. It is incumbent on each of us and, more importantly, our elected officials to do the work necessary to address the pandemic and protect our democracy.

I extend infinite gratitude for the authors' patience as we prepared their pieces for publication, and to the *Quarterly* staff who went above and beyond.

Respectfully,

Richelle Joy Gernan
Editor in Chief, Volume 48
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